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NSC REVIEW  
COMPLETED  
, 6/26/03

Commander Edward L. Beach, USN, Chairman  
NSC Special Committee on Attack Warning Channels and  
Procedures for Civilians  
The White House

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Dear Commander Beach:

This is in response to your letters dated 17 August to the Director of Central Intelligence and to the Intelligence Advisory Committee in which you request a progress report on actions taken pursuant to NSC 5513/1.

All necessary action has been taken by the intelligence community in discharging its responsibilities as outlined in the chart. Under present operating procedures, the responsibilities assigned to the Director of Central Intelligence, the Intelligence Advisory Committee, and the Watch Committee with its National Indications Center, as set forth in the chart, are clear, are consistent with our interpretation of what they ought to be, and are within our capability to carry out. In short, the chart accurately reflects what we are now attempting to do.

Sincerely,

C. P. Cabell  
Lieutenant General, USAF  
Acting Director

Note: The above text was approved by the Watch Committee on 31 August, and by the IAC on 1 September.

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

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August 17, 1955

Noted by DD/I  
AUG 23 1955

Honorable Allen W. Dulles  
Director of Central Intelligence  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Dulles:

As you know, a Special Committee on Attack Warning Channels and Procedures for Civilians was set up to coordinate the implementation of the chart of such channels and procedures issued as NSC 5513/1. In pursuance of this directive the committee desires to query departments and agencies involved concerning action they have taken and difficulties they have encountered in so doing. It is therefore requested that you forward to this committee a review of the status of implementation of the provisions in the chart as it affects your agency, including comments and recommendations as may seem appropriate, giving insofar as practicable an estimated date for the completion of implementing machinery under your cognizance.

Comments are also requested on the following committee interpretations of certain areas of the chart:

The Federal Civil Defense Administration will receive the color warning signals from the Continental Air Defense Command (CONAD), and will pass such signals with as much amplifying information as may be available to state and local civil defense key points. Public action signals will be sounded by local civil defense directors in accordance with previously laid plans. The public action signal responsive to a warning of "Attack PROBABLE" (CONAD's Warning YELLOW) is public action signal "ALERT". According to civil defense officials, this will in most communities be the signal for evacuation of urban target areas. The signal responsive to a warning of "Attack IMMINENT" (CONAD's Warning RED) is public action signal "TAKE COVER", which in all cases is a direct reading signal requiring immediate shelter.

The committee is of the opinion that the actions laid down in Section IV. E. of the chart are intended to stem from local civil defense announcement of "Attack PROBABLE". They would not be initiated solely by USAF warning to the White House. Ideally, alerting of the White House to a Warning YELLOW by the USAF Command Post, Pentagon, should come almost simultaneously with local civil

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defense announcement of "Attack PROBABLE" (Civil Defense public action signal "ALERT"), though practically speaking such coincidence might not be the case. The committee believes that evacuation of the White House and relocation of essential executive branch personnel should commence upon public announcement through a commonly understood signal on the warning devices, not as an automatic action resulting only from USAF warning to the White House.

The committee is of the opinion that Warnings WHITE, YELLOW and RED are military air defense warning signals only, giving an indication of the degree of certainty of attack and a generalized time factor. As far as civilians are concerned, "Air Defense Emergency" should therefore be understood to include all the conditions under which CONAD might feel a Warning WHITE was in order (i.e., a condition of danger and heightened preparedness but in which there is no positive indication of enemy attack). Should there be more urgency indicated, CONAD would impose Warning YELLOW or Warning RED.

The committee is of the opinion that CONELRAD and SCATER are not paired, that either might be implemented without the other, and that of the two CONELRAD is the more likely to lead to immediate public awareness of Air Defense Emergency. In either case, however, such widespread control over civilian operations amounts to virtual public announcement of the emergency and a prepared public statement should be issued simultaneously.

The committee notes that the chart is also a directive to the District of Columbia Civil Defense Director to include certain provisions for the continuity of the Government in his plans.

Comments are desired, if practicable, prior to the next meeting of the committee, currently scheduled for September 6, 1955.

Respectfully,



EDWARD L. BEACH

Chairman, NSC Special Committee on Attack  
Warning Channels and Procedures for Civilians

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